

TOWN OF BURRILLVILLE

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**Joint Resolution of the
Burrillville Town Council and Burrillville School Committee
Resolution No. 25-01
Requesting Support and Subsidy for
Transportation of Homeless Students**

WHEREAS, Rhode Island General Law (RIGL) 16-21.1-1(5) and 16-21.1-2 currently require State and local education agencies to provide and fund private school transportation; and

WHEREAS, transportation of private school students is not a federal requirement; and

WHEREAS, Rhode Island's homeless student population has increased over 600% in the last ten years and now costs districts over \$6 million per year; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Burrillville has incurred significant costs due to the unilateral placement of unhoused families on the Zambarano campus of Eleanor Slater Hospital; and

WHEREAS, transportation costs for homeless students have varied from approximately \$25,000 to \$30,000 per month; and special education costs typically exceeds \$75,000 per student; and

WHEREAS, the additional costs of transporting homeless students to their districts of origin far exceed the funding awarded by the State to defray costs, which has greatly impacted the Burrillville student population; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Burrillville is in full compliance with requirements to provide a free and appropriate public education to the students in need, several of which require special education resources, and that the associated costs have escalated to the point it has become an undue burden; and

WHEREAS, Massachusetts provides a 100% State subsidy for homeless students and 0% for private schools, while Rhode Island does the inverse.

WHEREAS, the Burrillville School Committee believes that amending RIGL 16-21.1-1 to require nonpublic nonprofit schools to share in the cost of transportation with the sending school districts and to shift private school subsidies to cover homeless students would be beneficial;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council and School Committee of the Town of Burrillville requests support from our legislative delegation and the directors of education of cities and towns regarding assistance in transportation of homeless students.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town Council and School Committee of the Town of Burrillville respectfully request the Rhode Island General Assembly support the amending of RIGL 16-21.1-1 shifting the private school subsidy to cover homeless students, and require private schools to share in the cost of the statewide transportation system as follows:

§ 16-21.1-1 General Purposes.

This chapter shall be construed and applied to:

(1) Create a state plan for the busing of pupils beyond city or town limits, in recognition of the legislative policy to encourage the establishment of and continuance of consolidated and regional schools;

(2) Provide a unified statewide busing service;

(3) Afford to pupils who attend public schools the opportunity at the election of the school committee of the city or town in which the pupils reside to attend a public school, either full time or part time, outside of the city or town which provides a program or curriculum not available within the city or town in which the pupil resides, as authorized by §16-3.1-1 et seq.;

(4) Afford to children with disabilities equal educational opportunity;

(5) Afford bus transportation to pupils who attend nonpublic nonprofit schools which are consolidated, regionalized, or otherwise established to serve residents of a specific area within the state, ~~and who may be counted for purposes of reimbursement to cities and towns under the state aid formula provided by §16-7-22 et seq.~~ ; provided the nonpublic nonprofit schools who qualify for Statewide transportation pursuant to §16-21.1-2 share in the cost of transportation with the sending school districts.


(6) Afford bus transportation to homeless and displaced students and who may be counted for purposes of reimbursement to cities and towns under the state aid formula provided by §16-7-22 et seq.;

~~(6)~~(7) Conserve valuable natural resources by reducing the number of vehicles necessary to transport pupils to school; and

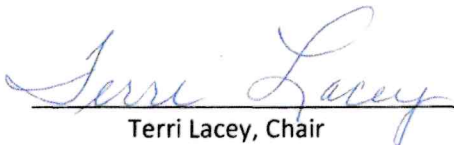
~~(7)~~(8) Provide for the transportation of public school students who attend schools located outside of the city or town in which they reside, to protect the health, safety, and welfare of pupils who live at such distances from the schools which they attend as to make it impractical or hazardous to require the pupil to walk to school.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town Council and School Committee of the Town of Burrillville respectfully requests immediate subsidy from the State of Rhode Island to defray the ongoing and already incurred costs of providing transportation of homeless students to their districts of origin.

Adopted this 26th day of February 2025.



Donald A. Fox, President
Burrillville Town Council



Terri Lacey, Chair
Burrillville School Committee

ATTEST: 

Vicki Martin, Town Clerk

